

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
RETREAT MINUTES  
(GOLF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING INCLUDED)  
Auburn Hills Golf Course Meeting Room  
443 S. 135<sup>th</sup> Street West  
Wichita, KS 67235  
December 13, 2014  
8:30am (Golf Advisory Committee Meeting)  
10:30 (Retreat)**

**Present:** Bryan Frye, Cindy Claycomb, Hoyt Hillman, Chris Highfill, Steve Hieger

**Absent:** Tom Roth, Ron Allen

**Also Present:** Troy Houtman (Director of Park and Recreation), Christina Butler (Clerk), David McGuire, Troy Hendricks, Evelyn Turner, Larry Hoetmer, Stacey Hamm, Lisa Klaassen.  
The following were present for the Golf Advisory Committee Meeting only: Michelle Haun (Clerk), Blaine Knott, Ron Reese, Cindy Renard, Tom Monahan, Aaron Calderon, Colin O'Bryan, Ron Mosher, Shana Appelhanz, Michael Solomon, Debbie Burch, Gary Ferris, Richard Schodorf, Darryl Court.

**The Golf Advisory Committee Meeting** was brought to order at 8:35am. The minutes were submitted by Michelle Haun.

Frye explained that this Park Board Retreat is a combined meeting of the Park Board and the Golf Advisory Committee. Frye introduced Mr. Houtman as the new Park Department Director.

**Approval of Minutes from 9/16/2014**

Frye made the motion to approve as is.

Ferris 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Frye stated motion passed.

**Rounds/Expenditures**

Hendricks stated rounds were down 20% from where they were last year and that there were seven days of no play due to the weather, in November. Rounds overall, were still up 1% over last year and expenditures were down. Nationally, we are doing better than other programs. We have the \$550k in the bank that is needed at the end of the year for the enterprise fund to make it through the winter.

Frye asked if there were any questions regarding rounds.

**2015 CIP Projects**

Hendricks stated that we have updated a CIP list from 2008, prioritizing revenue generating items. In process is the fence at MacDonald. Bridge bumpers at Clapp are being worked on. We removed plans for a driving range at Sim. MacDonald does need a new clubhouse, but there is no funding available for that. Clapp creek improvements will be worked on by storm water. They will remove an abandoned sewer line

and higher banks will be added. We will be adding a driving range at MacDonald to generate additional revenue. We have the space available including 5-6 acres for a pitch and putt area. This would be a good opportunity for new players. We want to look at adding a short play area at Clapp. Storm water will also be working on the ponds at MacDonald to make them deeper. MacDonald uses approximately 80% storm water. Renovation of bunkers at Tex Consolver is estimated to take \$500k. We would like to see a fence added along Amidon at Sim. We are missing a sales opportunity at Sim by not offering lunch opportunities by expanding our concession area to include a dining area. We have underground fuel tanks that need to be updated. Sim is one of our largest courses that has the smallest cart fleet. We really need to expand their cart fleet and add additional storage. As mentioned before, MacDonald clubhouse needs some work. At this time we can add a nice patio area. There is a good opportunity with Wesley being nearby for lunch sales. Sim maintenance building needs to be enlarged. If we add a range at MacDonald, we will need to enhance parking. We also need to consider the possibility of adding security fence around Clapp.

Schodorf stated that we previously talked about growth of the game. He asked if we have looked at the improvements for MacDonald in terms of a learning program.

Hendricks stated yes, the plan is similar to what we wanted to implement at Clapp. We are wanting to expand our opportunities with SNAG golf. The kids learning golf in the school systems need places to go.

Schodorf asked if we are going to offer packages. We should make one course the top teaching facility.

Hendricks stated that we are going to add more practice greens at all of the courses.

Schodorf stated that we need to make this a presentation for growing the game of golf.

Hendricks stated that we also need look at combining efforts with Recreation for SNAG programs.

Burch stated that we have plans at Air Capital to purchase more for SNAG.

Schodorf asked if kids can still be involved in a league without being in SNAG.

Hendricks stated that the junior golf program meets that need at this time.

Frye asked if we have any revenue projections for a driving range.

Hendricks stated that it would be close to \$50-60k on the east side.

Frye asked about revenue projections for short courses.

Hendricks stated around \$15k.

Frye reiterated that there would be no course renovations needed to add a driving range at MacDonald.

Hendricks stated no, it would not.

Ferris asked what the annual capital budget is.

Frye stated none.

Houtman asked how much the debt service is.

Hendricks stated \$6.3 million with anticipated payoff in 2035.

Schodorf stated that during the conversation regarding Clapp, there was discussion about other property the Division has available to sell and asked if we are still looking at that.

Frye stated that there are lots around Auburn Hills that are vacant.

Houtman stated that these sales need to go back to the golf fund.

Frye stated that some of the improvements discussed are necessary.

Hendricks stated that timing might help diminish expense on some of the projects.

Houtman pointed out that some of the projects are similar.

Hendricks stated yes, this would bring better bids if we lump them together.

Ferris asked that at we provide cost and revenue projections for the revenue generating improvements at the next meeting. Most capital projects are a 10 year investment. Tex Consolver being the top played course should be a priority to get the work on the bunkers done.

### **Marketing**

Hamm stated that there are big changes to the marketing plan. In 2015 we will have a \$50k budget. Shana Appelhanz will be helping out by going out to the businesses. We are dropping TV advertising. Golf has a new website. We will be focusing more on women and youth in 2015. Women golfers look at golf websites. Establish a group of women to promote the game, digital media, search engine enhancements (utilize google analytics). We will focus social media on women. We are adding a Facebook account just for women golfers and will be retargeting ads. We are improving keyword searches and optimizing our page. Shana will be taking over the back end of the website. At this time Tex Consolver is the only course that shows up on search engine searches. Digital retargeting will be able to track where surfers go after they leave our site. We will also be creating a mini event for women in addition to existing tournaments.

Burch asked if we have any numbers on how many women golfers play at the city courses and do they all have a ladies league.

Hamm stated that she is working on the numbers. Approximately 691 women at this time.

Knott stated that we need to engage some of the country club ladies.

Hamm stated that feedback from lessons was positive, but when it was over there was no continuation to encourage them to keep playing.

Schodorf stated that we can use pricing to encourage more or less time spent with the professional.

Hieger stated that 3 of his 4 daughters want to learn golf. They lack a peer group to play with.

Burch stated that this speaks to the importance to starting younger.

Hamm stated that \$18k of the budget will be focused on women golfers.

Reese stated that we need to focus on more than one year for the return.

Hamm stated that we will work on putting out a golf guide for the golf system. We need to be selective on the information put in it. We will not be doing a mail distribution for this.

Ferris asked if this will be put into a digital format for the website.

Hamm stated yes. We will also include a section in the recreation guide for golf.

Frye asked if there were any questions.

### **Customer Service**

Hendricks stated that we have received the fewest number of complaints at the facilities this year. Most of the complaints were about Sim, and many compliments were received about Aaron joining the team there. We currently have a vacant position for head pro at Sim.

Frye asked if we are still doing secret shopper.

Hendricks stated no. This year we have created a training DVD.

Frye asked if there were any comments.

Knott stated kudos. Customer service has been markedly improved.

Claycomb commended the staff on turning around the negative comments.

### **Scaling Fee**

Hendricks stated that Scaling Fees refers to fees changing throughout the day. Golfers pay more for prime time. Hendricks provided a chart showing total revenue at regular rate versus revenue at scaled rate. Scaled fees provide better revenue than the coupon special.

McGuire asked how that affects the perception of the golfers.

Hendricks stated that more golfers will pay to ride when paying a cheaper rate to play at a later time.

Frye asked if we would get negative feedback by not offering coupons.

Hendricks stated that we produced better results with Swing and Save and digital discounts than we did with printed coupons.

Frye stated that we would be the first in the area to offer scaling fees.

Claycomb pointed out that in the example it looks like we are expecting the same rounds.

Hendricks stated yes, some golfers would move to cheaper times but add carts.

Houtman added that they may also spend in other areas, such as concessions.

Frye stated that we will need to go to Council with this.

Hendricks stated that we are discussing a discount, not a fee change. We will make a proposal to send to Mr. Houtman that he can take to Council.

Houtman asked when we would make this effective.

Hendricks stated April 1.

### **Open discussion**

Hendricks stated that a Pace of Play study by USGA recommends dropping tee times to 10 minutes.

Reese stated that on our website, we should only allow foursome bookings.

Schodorf asked where we are on handicap flags.

Mosher stated that every course has 5 flags available.

Reese stated that we probably need to add a policy regarding the placards.

Schodorf asked if we can bring this to our next meeting. He also asked if the new POS software has the ability to send email blasts.

Hendricks stated yes.

Ferris asked how we are collecting email addresses.

Hendricks stated that the new system will collect them on the website, and we will collect them from all new golfers coming into the clubhouse.

Ferris stated that we should offer an incentive for providing an email address.

Frye stated that we can send emails for engagement purposes as well.

Houtman stated we can also use them for reminders of what we offer.

Burch stated that there is a 1<sup>st</sup> Tee chapter being formed in Wichita.

Hendricks stated yes, that he has met with them at Terradyne. There are requirements to have this group, such as being a non-profit organization and having a classroom setting.

Ferris asked if we have 9-hole policy.

Hendricks stated golfers can play 9 holes any time.

Houtman stated that other golf courses don't feel the need to make changes. It is encouraging to see that we make discussions to keep moving forward.

Frye asked what we need to do to take care of the geese.

Hendricks stated that Kansas Wildlife has provided us a contact who will euthanize migratory geese.

Claycomb asked how much it cost.

Hendricks stated \$60 per hour.

Hillman stated that this is related to landscaping issues. We can alter goose migration by changing landscaping. This would be a long-term solution.

**Schedule next meeting**

Items for discussion:

CIP

Details on scaling fees

Handicap flags

Jan 20<sup>th</sup> 4:00 at MacDonald

**The Retreat was called to order after the Golf Advisory Committee Meeting at approximately 10:30am.**

**Item 1: Capital Priorities**

Houtman stated he has met with community members this past month. The City Manager thinks the City needs signature CIP projects to put Wichita on the map and to serve the community's needs. One of those projects is the Aquatics Master Plan which is ready to be accepted to the next level. There has been some re-direction on the project and they will be working on that after the first of the year. Included in the Master Plan is a signature natatorium which will be geared to lessons and swim meets. Regarding parks, they are looking for more acreage for passive parks and open space. There are plans in place for that. Crystal Prairie Lake is moving a little faster than expected and he is talking to Finance for that funding.

Frye asked if the Board had heard any capital requests.

Hillman noted that Sedgwick County voted to move funds in to 2015 for the 2015-2017 Bicycle Path connection from Derby to Wichita. This should help with regional connectivity. 2017 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chisholm Trail. The Board could work with the historical society to establish a Chisholm Trail pathway by the library and incorporate it into the West Bank plan.

Frye stated that he serves on the Community Investments Planning Committee and all plans are getting supported including the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, PROS, and CIP. The PROS plan was adopted in 2008 and needs to be re-visited and updated. The connectivity is an important part of residential development, jobs and economic development.

Hoetmer added that they are working on the plans for connectivity near Crystal Prairie Lake.

Frye stated he is excited to hear the plans for Crystal Prairie Lake are happening sooner rather than later.

Hoetmer stated the lake is being mined now and has been told that production of the sand mining will

double.

Frye stated that Crystal Prairie Lake will be located at K-96 and Hoover. The Park Board needs to be focused when looking at the CIP and know what their top priorities will be.

Houtman added they need two or three signature sites to generate more enthusiasm to do smaller projects after that. They need to focus on these two to three things and come back later to get support for the future projects.

Frye noted the things they have done with the Golf and Recreation Divisions are positive. And Buffalo Park will be a jewel with the things being done there. The board can focus on other things because they no longer have to focus on fixing things like Golf and Recreation. The Aquatics Master Plan and Crystal Prairie Lake are exciting for the community.

Hoetmer added that the City has not had a public lake swimming amenity for two to three decades and feels it will become a regional attraction.

Houtman stated it will keep people here instead of going out of state for recreation.

Hieger stated the Department needs to avoid duplication of services with the YMCA and needs to compliment them.

Houtman stated they are trying to push the Aquatics Master Plan because the YMCA has the nice water parks. The City Park & Recreation Department can do more fitness and competition pools with lessons so as not to duplicate efforts of the YMCA.

Frye suggested the Board review the Aquatics Master Plan and asked Butler to send it out to the Board for review.

Frye asked if there was an update on the Buffalo Park grant.

Hoetmer stated that the Department had applied for the Outdoor Recreation Grant (ORG) Program, but has not heard back from the program yet. The Kansas Land and Water Conservation Grant (KLWCG) is for \$250,000 and the KLWCG requested \$500,000 from the ORG Program on the Department's behalf. It is going to City Council on January 6, 2015.

McGuire stated that if the Department does get awarded the grant, they will work on the amenities at Buffalo Park like the parking lot and the language is in the Agenda Report for City Council.

Hoetmer stated the water features, pumps, and parking lot sidewalks will be part of the KLWCG.

## **Item 2: Policy 13 Review**

Frye stated he suggested the Board review Policy 13 regarding the naming of City facilities because some communities have taken the opportunity to name/brand facilities and are considering sponsorships. Currently the City of Wichita's facilities are named after individuals. He would like to lead the discussion rather than having to adapt to someone else's policy. He asked the Board if they want to name/sponsor facilities after companies. He stated that Policy 13 is pretty clear, although City Council has the final say.

Hieger stated he thinks if a company wants to sponsor a facility, then the Board may want to consider it.

It could be marketed as an estate planning opportunity eventually.

Frye stated that maybe some of the exhibits at the Kansas Wildlife Exhibit in Riverside could be sponsored, or some of the aquatics programs, or even Crystal Prairie Lake.

McGuire noted it would be nice to have a policy.

Frye agreed and stated they need to anticipate unexpected situations.

Hamm added that the City Manager wants to bring in more non-traditional revenue, but this money would go into the General Fund if it went to the Department. She is looking at it more from the Parks Foundation side for new equipment, security, or staffing. There is a balance between what the City Manager wants and what would be good for the Foundation. She has written a sponsorship draft, but it is more geared to the City revenue. However, it can be tweaked.

Hieger stated he does not think the sponsorship program will be successful if the donors will not be assured that the money will go to where they want it to go. If it has to go to the General Fund, they will find other ways to do it or other places to donate their money.

Turner added that if the money is a donation, the funds must be spent for the specific reason for which it was donated. It is placed in a special account and must be spent that way.

Houtman stated that most places he has been do not want to see sponsorships all over the place. He feels it can be done tastefully by developing standards and managing it properly. He stated they could work on two different policies if necessary.

Frye stated he was hearing sponsorships for facilities or rooms in facilities; not sponsorships in parks.

Claycomb noted they need to have two policies: one for naming rights and another for sponsorships.

Hamm stated the Department does not want to lose its identity.

Houtman suggested they focus on the local companies, merchants and businesses to get local support.

Hamm noted she had worked with All Paws to sponsor the Meridian Dog Park. The foundation has a five year contract with them for \$1200 a year for maintenance or whatever needs to be put in the park. She has received positive feedback on this arrangement. There is a volunteer selling ads for Meridian Dog Park.

Hoetmer thought the timing is good especially with Crystal Prairie Lake going in. He feels the Park & Recreation Department will be able to maintain the brand while having the sponsorship.

Houtman noted that many have done this and the Department will work with the Law Department to ensure the contract has details.

Frye stated he would like to recommend this as a goal for 2015 and wanted to hear the Board's thoughts on the subject.

Hamm stated that Oklahoma City, Olathe, Jonson County, Salina and Colorado Springs are also working



on sponsorship packages.

**Item 3: 2014 Goals Review**

The Board reviewed the 2014 Goals and updated them for the 2015 Goals.

**Item 4: 2015 Goals**

Frye reviewed Item 1 regarding the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan. It was decided it should read to “review and update the PROS plan if necessary” and move the 2014 Item 1 to bullet A of the 2015 Item 1.

Frye asked if the Cost Recovery Pyramid Policy is working.

McGuire responded that for the Park Maintenance and Forestry Division it is not working. The \$25 special event application fee is liked. But revenues have gone down because rental fees have gone down.

Frye stated that it sounds like the Cost Recovery Pyramid Policy needs a staff review.

McGuire stated it affects the Recreation Division more.

Claycomb stated she thought they had changed the fees for special events as an improvement from a customer service standpoint, not for cost recovery. The Cost Recovery Pyramid policy was more for Recreation.

Klaassen noted the Recreation Division did meet the mark of increasing revenue by 5% the first year. The Division almost met the 5% increase the second year, however they probably will not make it in the third year.

Turner added that 2011 was the benchmark year. They have lost long time rentals such as Grace Med, and some senior rentals. The Recreation Centers have had to re-program those areas.

Klaassen added that it will take some time to re-program the space and cost recover.

Hillman asked if they have increased the number served.

Klaassen responded yes.

Claycomb stated it is a big hit when they lose the big rentals, but the intent was to evaluate the programs.

McGuire stated there is still a good balance of free and fee based programs.

Turner stated that the Department had been awarded the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant and Maureen Connelly Grant. Many sponsors love what the Department does, but some no longer have funding. Such is the case

for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant; the Department will not get that in the coming year. However, sponsors are helping the Department find funding to replace the grant.

It was decided that Item 2 and 3 will remain as goals for 2015.

Frye reviewed item 3C regarding way-finding. He noted that the fence at MacDonald Park has been a way-finding item.

Claycomb added that way-finding is a big part of the Bicycle Master Plan.

Frye stated his concern with the pedestrian signs because some of them are in bad shape.

McGuire asked if those could be taken down.

Frye suggested they start with removing one to see how it goes.

Claycomb stated she would vote to take them down.

Hamm stated there is nothing that says the signs have to stay up.

Claycomb stated she would like to have staff review the signs.

Houtman stated he will direct staff to look at them. He noted there should be standards.

Hoetmer stated that the Bicycle Master Plan has a line item that a standard should be designed, however it has not happened due to funding.

Houtman noted those standards go along with the standards for sidewalk installations, plaques, and benches.

Hoetmer stated there is still work to be done.

Houtman asked Hoetmer to review El Paso's standards which are online.

Frye reviewed item #4 regarding the PARC Fund. The name of the foundation was updated because it is now called the Wichita Parks Foundation. Also a Board of Park Commissioner is needed to serve as ex-officio to the Foundation Board.

Claycomb asked how often the Foundation meets.

Hamm responded monthly, usually the third Thursday. But they could change that if needed.

Claycomb stated she will consider it, but not sure she can commit.

Highfill stated he might possibly do it if Claycomb is unable.

Frye asked Hamm to let Highfill or Claycomb know the schedule for meetings.

It was decided to add “draft, review and present to City Council for adoption a sponsorship policy.”

Hamm asked if two separate policies should be written – one for naming and one for sponsorships.

Houtman responded staff will work on two separate policies and if needed, they can be merged easily.

Hillman reviewed #5 regarding Riverbank Revitalization and noted they did not get far with that last year. He noted they will get more river access once the river goes up by January 1, 2015. The ordinance needs to be updated.

Frye asked when the groundbreaking for River Vista is scheduled.

Houtman responded that he was not sure a groundbreaking has been scheduled.

Claycomb noted they have the draft of the River Ordinances.

Houtman stated he and staff will work on that this year. He is meeting with Hoetmer and Hillman in January to look at the river.

Frye asked Butler to update and send the 2015 Goals to the Board to adopt in January.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 12, 2015.

**Item 5: Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45am.

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**Bryan Frye, President**

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**Christina Butler, Clerk**